

A
S E R M O N
O F
R E P E N T A N C E.

A very godly and profitable Sermon,
preached at *Lee in Essex.*

By ARTHUR DENT, *Minister of Gods Words.*
Published at the request of sundry godly,
and well-disposed Persons.

IONAH 2. 8.

*They that waite vpon lying vanities, forsake their
owne mercies.*



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the Signe of the Golden Vnicorne in Pater-
noster Row. 1630.

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In Concionem *Arthuri Dent,*
G. Pudei Carmen.

Mature resipisce precor, peccataq; linque :
Qui legis, aut audis, qui quis es, istud opus.
Si nona peccatis peccata prioribus addes,
Olim hac te contra Concio testis erit.
Hec aliqui lecta flentes sua crimina multum,
Mutarunt mores, & nona tunc placet.

The same in English.

THou that dost reade or heare this worke,
I wish thee to doe this :
Repent in time, and sinne forsake,
Amend what is amisse.
But if thou wilt adde sinne to sinne,
Not minding to amend :
This Sermon shall a witnesse be,
Against thee in the end.
Some that haue heard this read of late,
Lamenting much their sinne :
Haue chang'd their former manners, and
A new life now begin.



To the Reader.

Although I was most vn-
willing that this poore
talent & trauell of mine
should euer haue beene broached
abroad, and come to light, both
because it may seeme as a candle
lighted at noone-day, as also, be-
cause many other mens doing
might more worthily a great
deale haue beene published and
committed vnto letters; yet be-
cause diuers which heard it prea-
ched with a liuely voyce were
very instant, yea, and more then
importunate with mee to haue it
published, vsing such reasons as I
could not greatly gaine-say, I did
at last yeeld to their requests: and

To the Reader.

so this vntimely fruite is come abroad to be sold in open markets. Let no man therefore bee offended, that I haue not strained my selfe to fly an high pitch, to foame out the froath of mans wisdom, and to make a great shew of learning, by blowing the bladder of vanitie, till it burst with swelling; but it is not my vse; I seeke especially the saluation of the simple & ignorant: and therefore stoope downe to their reach and capacity. Therefore I beseech thee, gentle Reader, accept my good meaning: Reade this without preiudice; like it as thou profitest; so shalt thou haue praise of God, and comfort in thy Conscience.

A



A SERMON of Repentance.

LUKE 13. 5.

It tell you nay, but except you repent, you shall
all likewise perish.

The occasion of these words of our
Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,
was, because there were certaine
that shewed him the Galileans,
whose blood Pilate had mingled
with their owne Sacrifices, that is, murdered
them as they were sacrificing, and so their blood
was mingled with the blood of the beasts which
were sacrificed. These men therefore thought
that those Galileans were greater sinners then
all other Galileans, because they had suffered
such things: and that those eightene also, vpon
whom, the Tower of Siloam fell and slew them,
were sinners aboue all the men that dwelt in
Ierusalem. Wherein they did utter a so-
ruption naturally engendred in a
very sharply to see into the sin-
ly to censure of them, &
secret cor-
rupt that is,
of others, seuer-
at in the meane while to
flatter

flatter themselves, and to be blind-fold in seeing their owne sinnes. For these men thought, because the like iudgements did not fall vpon them, therefore they were well enough, they were not so great sinners, but rather highly in the fauour of God, according as many doe falsely suppose, that they are alwaies the worst sort of people whom God doeth most strike and presse with his punishing hand: hauing forgotten that God doeth not keepe an ordinary rate here below, to punish every man as hee is worst, or to fauour and cocker him as hee is best: but onely taketh some examples, as hee thinketh good, for the instruction and aduertisements of all others, and to be, as it were, looking-glasses, wherein every man may see his owne face, yea, and his owne cause handled, and that God is a seuerer reuenger of sinne: that all men may learne by the example of some, to tremble and beware, lest peradventure they bee worthily constrained to keepe their owne turnes, and to know what they haue deserued. These men which brought these newes to our Saviour Christ, had taken sooth this lesson: Whereupon our Saviour is iustly occasioned to correct their erronious & sinister iudgement, and to teach them that they must not reioyce at the iust punishment of others, but rather be instructed thereby to repent.

And

of Repentance.

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And further, to signifie that God doeth not alwayes most punish the most notorious offenders, as murderers, thieves, robbers, whores-mongers, blasphemers, quarrellers, scoffers, and such like: But reserueth them vnto the iudgement of the great day, and, as it were, setteth them against the day of slaughter, and therefore he answereth them negatiuely, and saith, No, or not so; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish: As if he should say, Are ye all of this opinion indeed, that onely monstrous sinners are punished in this world, and others let alone? Or that the Galileans, and those eightheene vpon whom the Tower of Siloam fell, were greater sinners then all others? Or doe you thinke because the same iudgements haue not light vpon you, therefore you shall scale away in the darke, and escape the iudgements of God? No, no, you are deceiued: For I say vnto you, that except you mourne and lament for your sins, and fall to some agreement with God in time, you (I say, euen you, which are so ready to condemne others, and iustifie your selues) shall not onely perish with the like iudgements in this present world, but be everlastingly condemned in the world to come. So that our Saviour in so saying, doeth thunder downe a most dreadfull sentence vpon all our heads: For hee concludeth and setteth downe,
that

that all men liuing vpon the face of the earth, whether they be high or low, rich or poore, yong or old, noble or vn-noble, learned or vnllearned, simple or politicke, of what state, degree, and condition soeuer they be, liuing and oping without Repentance, shall perish and be damned in hell fire for euer. The scriptures are full of such thunder-bolts, Iohn 3. 18. He that beleeues not is damned already: And 2. Cor. 13. 5. Prooue your selues, whether you are in the Faith: examine your selues: know you not your selues that Iesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates? Where the Apostle flatly setteth downe that all those which haue not Christ dwelling in their hearts by faith, which is the household-sister of Repentance, are no better then reprobates, cast-awayes, and condemned persons. But because the most people in these dayes are grossely deceiued in Repentance, both concerning what it is, what it meaneth, what it worketh, what be the qualities and conditions of it, which be the causes, and which be the lets and hindrances: and also why, when, and wherefore we should repent: therefore I haue a present intent to teach, first what is Repentance: secondly, which bee her qualities and effects: thirdly, when we should repent: fourthly, wherefore we should repent: and last of all, what letteth vs from repentance. Which order and method

of Repentance.

5

thod of teaching, although some may mislike (as indeed with me it is not ordinary) yet considering the matter I haue in hand, I thinke it not inconuenient. But to the matter.

Repentance is an inward sorrowing and continuall mourning of the heart and Conscience for sin, ioyned with faith, and both inward and outward amendment. Inward (I say) in changing the thoughts and affections of the heart, and outward in changing the words and workes from euill to good. This repentance no doubt, was in Dauid, who when he was couertly repproued by the Prophet Nathan, and his sinnes laid before his eyes, did not stubbornely defend them, and so iustle against God: nor yet secretly excuse them, and danbe them ouer, but cryeth out in the bitterness of heart, I haue sinned, and thereupon made the 51. Psalm, a Psalm indeed full of dolour and heauinesse, wherein the Prophet bewaileth his faults, lamenteth his sinnes, and prayeth enen for a new Heart, and a new Spirit, new thoughts, new affections, new promises of amendment of life: so that in Dauid we may see an inward sorrowing, a lasting griefe (as the Booke of Psalmes doeth euery where declare, which layeth him out as it were in an Anatomy) yea, and great reformation, both in inward & outward sinnes. Here therefore behold what is Repentance.

Like:

Likewise S. Peter through infirmities hauing denied his Lord and Sauer Christ, and being pined of his owne Conscience and wakened with the alarme of a poppe Cocks crowing, went out of the Court of Pilate, with an heauie heart weeping bitterly, and euer after stoutly professing Christ euen vnto the death. See then what is Repentance. The Prophets, in the Old Testament, exhorting the rebellious Iewes vnto Repentance, vse commonly an Hebrew Verbe, which signifies, Turne yee, or Returne yee, and come backe againe: by the which Metaphor is meant, that like as a man that is strayed farre out of his way, must returne quite backe againe the contrary way: So those that haue strayed from the way of godlinesse to the way of sinne, must come backe againe as fast as euer they went forward, and altogether change the course of their life: So that repentance is an earnest turning vnto God, withall your heart, soule and minde. Saint Iohn Baptist, and the Apostles in the new Testament, exhorting vnto Repentance, vse the Greeke word, which signifieth a changing of the minde afterward, or after-wit: So that those which through their folly, and want of former wit, haue slipped into the deepe pit and dangerous gulse of sinne, when they come vnto themselves, and haue recouered their wits,

will

of Repeptance.

7

will be wise afterward, and take heed they neuer come there againe, according to the Pro-
uerbe: The burnt Childe will take heed of the
fire. By this time, I hope you see what is Re-
pentance; It is not euery sorrow, but sorrow
for sinne; not for some sinne, but for all sinne:
not for an houre; but for euer: Not for a day;
but continually: Not for a weeke, but as long
as we liue. Some thinke euery sorrow is Re-
pentance, but so should Moyses repent.
Some thinke euery little pang for sinne is Re-
pentance, so should Pharaoh repent. Some
thinke all weeping and lamenting for sinne is
Repentance, so should Esau, Iudas and Cain re-
pent. Some thinke euery little humbling of
our selues is Repentance, but so should Ahab
repent. Some thinke that good workes, and
good purposes are Repentance, but so should
euery sicke man repent. Some thinke that a
reformation of words and deedes are Repen-
tance, but so should ciuill men repent. Some
thinke that to cry God mercy is Repentance, &
so should euery soule repent. You see therefore
how many are deceived in Repentance. But if
you will see what it is indeed looke backe to that
which hath beene said before: for he that will
repent in good earnest, must not hang downe
his head like a bulrush for a day onely, and so
haue done: Nor cry from the teeth outward,
Lord

Lord haue mercy on me, and so away: but hee
 must make a backe-reckoning, with diligene
 consideration of his former life as did the Pro-
 phet Dauid, Psal. 119. 50. I haue considered
 my wayes, and turned my feete vnto thy Testi-
 monies. So must euery one that meaneth to
 repent, lincke aside into some corner or out-
 place, that there he may haue roome enough to
 beate his owne Conscience, and to make his
 Heart smart for his sinnes, by aggrauation
 thereof, and weighing all the circumstances,
 as in the story of Daniel: The Church of
 God confesseth her sinnes, not lightly, but with
 wonderfull great exaggeration, and heaping
 vp one thing to another. So that it is not
 enough to say, I haue sinned: but to say, I
 haue most traitterously sinned, I haue most
 obstinately, carelessly, and rebelliously sinned:
 I haue monstrously offended in such a place, in
 such a house, in such a company, on such a day,
 in such a corner, in the darke, I committed A-
 dultery closely, when I thought none had seene
 me, in such a chamber I defiled my neigh-
 bours wife, mine owne conscience doeth accuse
 mee of it: in such and such company I haue
 been drunke, I haue spoken and railed against
 Gods Word, I haue mocked the Preachers,
 I haue spared no oathes nor filthy speech: and
 now (O Lord) Lord, what an ugly monster
 and

of Repentance.

9

and wretched villaine am I: Were I stand
before thy presence, all naked, blinde, wounded,
poore, wretched and miserable, hauing deserued
a thousand damnations, if thou wouldest enter
into iudgement and try the Law with mee.
Therefore I beseech thee to shew pitie and
compassion vpon mee. Anoint my wounds
with the oyle of mercy, restore me my sight,
cloathe my nakednesse, enrich mee that am
poore, strengthen me that am weake, helpe mee
that am fallen: O bid me not farewell. The
infant ouer-commieth his mother with crying,
the childe his father with weeping, and the
seruant his master by entreaty, and wilt thou
not be intreated, O Lord: Thus, I say, if eue-
ry man would speake in his conscience to God,
and thus narrowly, or more narrowly examine
himselfe, vndoubtedly hee were in the way to
Repentance.

But alas, it is a world to see how the blinde
Buzards, and crooked Canker-wormes of
this World goe awry from this rule, detei-
uing themselves with the bare title and na-
ked name of Repentance. Many (indeed) can
talke of it, but few walke in it: many speake
of it, but few feele it: many describe it, but
few know it. It is hid and locked vp from
the World, and reuealed onely vnto Gods
Chilozen: many thinke they haue caught it
when

when they haue but the shadow of it. It is so high that few can reach it: It is so deepe that few can come to the bottome of it: It is so narrow, that few can enter into it: So wide, that few can comprehend it: So slippery, that few can hold it: So secret, that few can finde it: Therefore, my deare brethren, I beseech you let vs pray vnto our God, that he would reueale vnto vs this Mytery which is hid from the world, that we may see it, and knowe it, finde it, and feele it to our endlesse comfort, through Christ Iesus, which grace he grant vs.

But now to the second point, concerning the qualities and Fruites of Repentance: one especiall qualitie of Repentance is alwayes to bring with it remission of sinnes: For where true Repentance goeth before, there remission of sinnes must necessarily follow after: Not that Repentance deserueth remission of sinnes, but because where God worketh Repentance, there he pardoneth sinnes, because of his Promise, as in Ezekiel 18. 17. When the wicked turneth away from his wickednesse that hee hath committed, and doeth that which is lawfull and right, he shall saue his soule aliue: And againe, Esay 55. 7. Let the wicked forsake his wayes, and the vnrighteous his owne imaginations, and turne vnto the Lord, and he will haue Mercy vpon him. So here wee see to whom

of Repentance.

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whom forgiveness of sinnes, and the mercy of God belongeth: namely, to the penitent sinners, to those that leaue sinne, and embrace godlinesse, to those that forsake their owne wayes and imaginations, and turne vnto the Lord. And as for such as walke in their owne wayes & follow the delights of sin, without any sorrow or purpose to leaue them, they haue nothing to doe with the mercy of God: and though Iesus Christ had suffered a thousand deaths (which could not be) yet shall no impenitent sinner haue remission of his sins by his death, nor any other benefit of his passion: for they belong onely to his Church and chosen people here vpon earth. He therefore that is not of the Church, he that is not grafted into Christ by faith, hee that is not a member of his mysteall body, can enjoy nothing by Christs death: If any man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch and withereth, and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they burne. Ioh. 15. 16. We reade in the 29. of Deut. how God barreth all stubborne sinners from his mercy, & doth most terribly shoot out against them, He that heareth the words of this curse, and blesseth himselfe in his heart, saying; I shall haue peace, although I walke according to the stubbornnesse of mine owne heart, thus adding drunkennes to thirst: the Lord will not be mercifull vnto him, but then the wrath of

the Lord, and his ieaiousie shall smoeake against that man, and euery curse that is written in this booke shall light vpon him. So that God saith plainly, he hath no mercy for such as walke in vaine delights of sinne, & in the stubbornesse of their owne hearts, adding drunkenesse to thirst: that is, ioyning one horrible sin to another: yet for all that it is a wonder to see how the blinde wormes of the world deceiver themselves. For they thinke, whatsoever they say, whatsoever they doe, be it good, be it euill, whether they repent, or not repent, yet they shall bee saued by Christs death: as though they would make it a bawd to their sins, and so worke that villany against Christ; I hope to be saued by Christs death as well as the best of them all, say some. But where is thy repentance, thou miserable wretch? Dost thou thinke that Gods mercy is common to all? And Christs death a bawd for thy sins? No, no, when it cometh to the vpho, thou shalt hop-ho. For it will proue far otherwise. For thou shalt finde Gods mercy turned into iustice, and Christs death into worme-wood, because thou hatedst knowledge and chusedst not the feare of the Lord. Thus you see; my deare brethren, that Repentance must needs goe before forgiveness of sinne, and where it leaueh not the way, there the gates of Gods mercy are shut vp: and this is the first qualitie

of Repentance.

13

qualitie of Repentance. It hath also another condition, and that is, to alter and change men from that they were before, not in substance and proportion of the body, but in the qualities and conditions of the minde. For whosoever hath truly repented, you shall by and by see a most marvellous and wonderfull change in him, so that he will not doe as he hath done, nor speake as hee hath spoken, nor company as hee hath companied, nor play the good-fellow (as they terme it) as hee was wont to doe, nor runne the same excesse of ryot as he was wont. And this is that amazeth the world, and causeth them to bristle & foame at the mouth like wilde Bores, and to speake euill of them that turne vnto God: For the world loueth his owne, and cannot abide that God should plucke one feather from his wings; but repentance doeth violently pull men out of the claws of Satan, and change them from the condition of the world: for it maketh of proud, humble: of hurtfull, harmelesse: of cruell, meeke: of wolues, lambs: of Lyons, sheepe: of adulterers, chaste liuers: of drunkards, sober men: of swearers, reuerent speakers: of haters, friends: of dispisers, imbracers: of scoffers, louers: of earthly, heavenly: Diuels, Saints: all these worketh repentance, Paul tranelled towards Damascus a Wolfe, a Persecutor, a Blood-sucker, a Ha-

cer, a Despiser: but ere he came there, he was quite changed, and cleane of another minde: so mighty was he that met him in the way. When Iesus Christ sent downe the holy Ghost vpon his Disciples, according to his promise, there were some scoffers at Ierusalem, which mocked, and said, They are full of new wine: But the same men cryed out by and by after, Men and brethren, what shall we doe to be saued?

Here was a most wonderfull and sodaine change: See then the force of repentance, when God striketh it into the heart of a man, and driueth the naile to the head (as they say) it effecteth that which all the wisdom and policy of man is not able to bring to passe: and when they haue prouled hither and thither, and laid their heads together, and sought all the corners of their wits, yet can they not tell which way to turne their hand, or where to begin to change the heart of a man, and to conuert him to God. Therefore repentance is stronger then all the whole world, and worketh that which all men with their naturall wits, fine heads, and deepe deuices cannot compasse: for the conversion of a sinner is a worke supernaturall. Here then we haue a glasse to behold our selues in, whether euer we haue repented, or no: For if wee finde not this change and alteration in vs, we haue not repented, and so consequently remaine vn-

der

of Repentance.

15

der damnation. Therefore let every man looke
vnto himselfe: for marke how much he is ch-
ged and altered from his former wicked wayes,
so much hath he repented. And hee that is the
same man he was three, foure, eight, nay, thittie
yeeres agoe, surely, surely, he hath not repented,
and therefore abideth in damnation. I wat-
nell then how these men, which neuer felt any
change or alteration wrought in them, nay,
whose Conscience telleth them that they are
not changed, nor know what it meaneth, can
haue hope of saluation: vnlesse peradventure
they beleene not this doctrine, or thinke it to be
falle. I will send ouer these men to such as
haue beene in the like case they now are, and
yet thought they might doe well enough for
all that, although both blinde in iudgement,
and corrupt in conuersation. I haue knowne
and doe know men, which before their conuer-
sion and inward change, were counted as ho-
nest men as euer brake bread, and as substan-
tiall men as any could be, and as true dealers
bryght liners, good house-keepers, as any of
their neighbours: yea, and they had the same
opinion of themselves too: and yet notwithstanding
when they haue felt repentance working
this change and alteration in them, through
the power of the Spirit, at the preaching of the
Word: and when they haue had new hearts

ginen them to discern better, and new eyes to
 see better; as men come out of a dampe, haue
 wondred and maruelled at the palpable and
 grosse darknesse they were in before, and haue
 burst forth into these words, that they would
 not be in the same case they were before, no not
 for all the worlds goods: for if they had died
 in that case, they were sure they should haue
 bene damned. But I pray you what case were
 they in before: were they not good honest men,
 and well accounted of, and honest liuers, and
 well taken wheresoeuer they came: surely they
 were so taken in the world; but now they thinke
 farre otherwise of themselves, their eyes being
 opened, and their iudgements inlightened: for
 now they see what they saw not before: now
 they vnderstand that God condemneth many
 whom the world iustifieth. We thinketh this
 example should make ciuill and worldly men
 feare and suspect themselves, and know their
 owne misery before God. For those men were
 as good as they before their conuersion, and yet
 afterward confessed that they were plunged to
 the bottome of hell and drowned in the depth of
 damnation. Oe that hath eares to heare, let
 him heare: and he that hath eyes to see, let him
 see: for if men will still loathe themselves for all
 this, that they shall be saued, without feeling
 any change or worke of repentance, it will cost
 them

them full deere in the end. For Christs words will proue true, that whosoever repenteth not shall be damned, that is, whosoever doth not feele in himselfe what is repentance, and find in himselfe the qualities thereof, shall be condemned: for where repentance is, there be the qualities of repentance; and where the qualities be absent, there is no true repentance. So that where Christ saith, Except ye repent, ye shall all perish, it is all one as if he had said, except you know the truth of repentance, except you can proue vnto your Consciences the forgiveness of your sins, except pee feele a change and alteration in the bottome of your hearts for all your former lewd waies & misdeemeanours, you shall surely perish and be damned. But lets a little further search out the qualities of repentance. The Apostle in the 7. chap of the 2. Epistle to the Corinthians setteth downe seuen notable qualities and effects of repentance.

The first of them he nameth Care: For behold (saith he) this thing, that you haue beene godlily sorry, what care it hath wrought in you: this is an earnest study, and as it were, a taking thought to please God: for where true repentance hath once wrought, there followeth great care afterward: care (I say) to liue in the obedience of God: care to keepe a good Conscience, care to reforme our households, care to in-

struct our wives, children, and servants in the knowledge of God, care to pray with them morning and evening: and generally, care to performe all duties belonging to God: So that Repentance is not a carelesse, but a carefull thing. Let no man thinke therefore, that although they welter in carelesnesse of the flesh, and sleepe in security all the dayes of their life, yet their repentance is good enough: yea, and though they spend whole daies, nights, months, and yeeres in vanities, playes & pastime, in idleness, fond delights, pleasures & voluptuousnes, in negligence of all duty, forgetfulness of God, & contempt of all good things: yet for all this they repent for their sins, & hope to be saued as well as any other. But alas, how can these things stand together, to repent for sinne, and to delight in sinne, to hate sin, & to loue sin, to fly from sin, and to follow after sin? But these men I perceiue would faine make S. Paul a liar: for hee saith, A man hath neuer repented, except he be carefull afterward to please God, they say they doe repent, and haue repented, although they liue neuer so wretchedly and carelessly. But when all licentious & lewd liuers, filthy whores-mongers, beastly belly-gods, and carelesse car-tiffes, come to the kingdome of God, and are saued, then shall these men come also with them, to be saued by carelesse repentance.

The

The next quality and effect of repentance is named, Clearing of your selues, that is, discharging of our selues when sin doeth accuse vs, and lay things to our charge: for when sin and Satan doe terrifie the conscience of the poore penitent sinner, by and by he flieth vnto God, and asketh forgiveness through Iesus Christ, so clearing himselfe, and making his apologie against Sinne and Satan: like as a man that is presented into the Court vpon suspicion of whoredome, or any other notorious crime, must cleare himselfe by witnes, of that which is laid to his charge; so the conscience that is cited by Satan before the iustice and iudgement-seate of God, cleareth it selfe by Repentance, and asketh forgiveness through Iesus Christ. So that here we may see a wonderfull fruit of a penitent conscience: it cannot abide the accusation of sinne, it cannot be quiet till it be reconciled vnto God, and so haue peace with it selfe. For this is to be noted in a godly man, that when he hath committed any sinne, and his Conscience telleth him of it, by and by he feesles lead within him, and is all heauy, and cannot sleepe quietly, till he haue gotten into some corner, where hee may mourne and lament to the full, & confesse, & lay open himselfe vnto God, and so cleare himselfe through Iesus Christ, his conscience bearing him witnes that his sin is forgiven, & ther-

as contrariwise, the ungodly man, when his conscience accuseth him of sinne, he dispatcheth away all such thoughtes, and treadeth them under foote: and by and by calleth for a paire of Cards or Tables, or some merry companion, to drine away time, and to put out all such thoughtes out of his head: and so indeede he increaseth them more and more, and causeth them to ranckle inwardly.

The third qualitie is called Indignation: that is, a mortall and deadly hatred against sinne, as when a man doth shudder and shake, and, as it were, grinde his teeth at the remembrance of his sinnes: For this is alwaies in the penitent person, to loathe and abhorre all sinne from his heart, both his owne sinnes, and the sinnes of others, and to hate it, as the diuell himselfe, which is the author of it: and to flie from it, as from the very cut-throat and hangman of his soule, and to know it to be the onely thing that blindeth and hardeneth, that separateth from God, and procureth all plagues and diseases, both of body and soule against vs. Wherefore he spitteth at it in defiance, and disdaineth it, and stoppeth his nose at the stinke of it, where soever he smelleth it.

The fourth thing is Feare, which is a certaine awe of God, when a man is afraid to displease him: For the penitent person feareth alwayes,

wayes, and being priuy to his owne infirmitie and weakenesse (when God neuer so little withdraweth his grace and leaveth him alone) wor-
shippeth his saluation with feare and trembling. He will not presume vpon former grace to com-
mit any sinne, or flatter himselfe in the mercy of God, and the things that he hath already re-
sted of God, to yeeld to some little sin, thinking he may doe that, and be the childe of God well enough, because some of Gods Chilozen haue fallen into greater: but rather he trembleth at the least motion of sinne, and is afraid of the temptation which Satan trappeth in the way, and is afraid when the temptations of sinne are vpon him, to satisfie the hunger of sinne: but rather hee fighteth against sinne, when sinne fighteth against him, and presenteth the feare of God before his eyes (as godly Ioseph in the assaults of Potiphars wife) to bee, as it were, a tower of defence, & well-spring of life to auoide the snares of death.

The fift thing is Desire, that is, hungering and thirsting after righteousnesse. For the penitent man is ravished with a desire of good things: he desireth to be every day better then other, he desireth to leaue every day some sinne, he desireth to pray, he desireth new knowledge, and new understanding of heauenly things. He desireth to heare Sermons, and will straine himselfe

himselfe to heare them. He desireth the company of the godly, chusing himselfe in heauen, when he is amongst them. He desireth the saluation of his very enemies, and prayeth for them. All these, and many other such like desires, are in a penitent man.

The sixt quality is Zeale, which consisteth in the earnest embracing of vertue: and hatred of vice: so that the penitent person is zealous of euery good thing, zealous of Gods glory in all places, in all companies, and amongst all persons. He cannot abide that Gods honour should be impeached, or his name blasphemed, or his glory trampled under foote by wicked men: but will open his mouth to reprove the wicked, and stand stoutly in the defence of Gods glory. He is not like the Atheists and dissemblers, which are alwayes as the company, that is, godly amongst the godly, a Protestant amongst Protestants, wicked amongst the wicked, a Papist amongst Papists, a worldling amongst worldlings, and a swearer amongst swearers, a weather-cocke that turneth with euery wind. The penitent man, I say, is not of this stamp: but he is constant and zealous in all good things: he is zealous both against the pleasures and profits of sinne: though he might winne a whole world, or pleasure himselfe neuer so much by committing sinne against God, yet he will re-
fuse

fulse it: for he hath learned from Christs mouth that it shall not profit a man to win the whole world, and to lose his owne soule,

The last thing is Reuenge, that is, the penitent person is so offended with the sinne he hath committed, that he will bee reuenged of himselfe for it. As for example, if he haue offended in gluttony, he will reuenge himselfe by fasting two or thre dayes after. If he haue offended in whoredome, he will be reuenged of his lust by haltering and bydoling of them euer after. If he haue offended in couetous catching and polling of other mens goods, he will be reuenged on himselfe by restitution, as was godly and penitent Zacheus: and this indeed is a speciall fruit of Repentance, to reforme our selues in those things wherein we haue most offended. Now then we see (my deare brethren) what lieth in the belly of Repentance, and which bee her inwards: so that we must needs now come to the vnclasing and vnbowelling of Christs words: Except ye repent (saith he) yee shall all perish: that is, except ye haue this forerained Care, you shall all be damned: except ye haue this clearing of your selues, you shall be damned: except you haue this Indignation, you shall bee damned: except you haue this Feare, you shall be damned: except you haue this Desire, you shall all be damned: except you haue this Zeale, you shall

shall all be damned: except you haue this Re-
 uenge, you shall all be damned. For our Sa-
 uour Christ doeth not speake of the bare name
 of Repentance, but of Repentance with her fur-
 niture and appurtenances: so that whosoever
 hath not Repentance with all her qualities and
 effects, or at least, some measure of them, hee
 hath no Repentance indeed, and therefore shall
 be damned: For except you repent, ye shall all
 perish. But mee thinketh that I heare some
 man say: here is nothing but damnation, dam-
 nation: you preach nothing but the Law, let
 vs heare of the Gospell. My brethren, I pro-
 test vnto you, that I speake in love whatsoe-
 uer I speake, I desire the saluation of you all.
 If I could win but two of all this congrega-
 tion, I would count my selfe happy, and thinke
 that God had greatly blessed my labours. And
 vndoubtedly, If I knew any neerer way to
 bring you to God, then by preaching the Law,
 to make you know your selues, surely, surely, I
 would vse it: Or if I could be perswaded that
 the preaching of the Gospell, & mercy, would doe
 you more good, you should heare of nothing but
 Gospell, Gospell, Mercy, Mercy. But alas, I
 see that euery carelesse and ignorant man pre-
 sumeth vpon Gods mercy. I see that euery fil-
 thy liuer, and notorious blasphemers abuse
 Gods mercy, in applying it to himselfe without
 repen-

repentance, so that they would make Gods mercy a cloake for their sinnes: I see that euery man would faine be flattered in sinne, and heare of it no more, but haue the Gospell preached, which indeede belongeth not vnto them, continuing in their stubbornesse: But onely to the penitent sinner which forsaketh himselfe, and groaneth and panteth vnder the burden of his sinne. Therefore when I see you humbled with the conscience of your sinnes, and groane and pant vnder the burthen of them: when I see your faces blubbered with weeping, and your hearts mollified, and sorrowing with care, then will I comfort you, and cease to preach the Law. But I pray you, will you steale, murder, and commit adultery, and yet heare of mercy: Will you mocke, swear, blasphem, and raille, and yet heare of mercy: Will you serue sinne, hate vertue, and follow your owne lusts, and yet heare of mercy: Would you haue plaisters before you haue wounds: Would you haue physicke before you be sicke: Would you be let blood before you haue neede:

Would you not account him a foolish Physician, that will minister Physicke to a whole man: Would you not thinke him an vnskilfull Chirurgeon that will apply a gentle salve to an old festered soze, and not rather cozzie it: Then know you, my brethzen, that because you
are

are full of grosse humors, you must haue strong purgation, because you are full of old festered wounds, you must haue copious salues: for that is best for you, and the speediest way to recover your health: and forasmuch as you be rough horses, you must haue a rough rider, and hard knotte timber must haue hard wedges, & hard strokes with a beele. We preach the law, to bring you to Christ, we preach iudgement, to make you to seeke mercy, we preach damnation to bring you to saluation. But to preach mercy and forgiveness before men see their sins, or know their misery by the preaching of the law, is to preach the Gospell unprofitably: For he that is ignorant of the Law, knoweth not what misery is in himselfe, or what mercy is in God.

What father is there, who if his child should play the stubborne boy, and disobey him in euery thing hee commandeth, would stroke his head, and say he were a good boy: and not rather severely correct him, and whip him with a rod? What master will commend his seruant for doing what he list, and not what he commandeth him? Euen so we may not disobey, and doe euill, & looke to be flattered too, and not rather chidden. Let vs know then, that though God vse searing, lancing, or corling, and seareling of the bones, and other violent remedies: yet in the meane while he procureth our health by them.

houre: Shall hee giue him wine, whereas hee should giue him water: Shall he giue him sallets: it were the next way to poyson him. To be short, it is certaine that a man doth alwayes seeke his owne death, when he would haue men to soothe him. But now, which is better: either that he which hath the ordering of a sicke man, should yeeld to all his desires, or that he should bide him, notwithstanding that he chafe and gnash his teeth, because he may not haue his will in his desires: You see therefore how dangerous a thing it is to flatter and raise vp men with the preaching of Heresy, before they haue beene cast downe with the sense of Gods iudgement. Cease therefore to open your mouth, to make hue and cry ouer the Countrey, saying: They preach nothing but the Law, the Law, Damnation, Damnation; vnlesse you will take in Christ too, and make him one of the number, and accuse him of want of wisdom, because he preacheth and cryeth out, that whosoever repenteth not, shall be condemned. For my part, I preach the Gospell to whom the Gospell belongeth, and the Law to whom the Law belongeth, and iudgement to whom iudgement appertaineth. And therefore hold your peace, and bee content to bee ruled by the wisdom of God. But now let vs proceede to the thirs generall point, which is the time when we shall

of Repentance. 29

shall repent. The holy Ghost in the Scriptures pointeth vs to the present time, and exhorteth vs to make that the time of our Repentance: Ioel 2.12. Therefore also now the Lord saith: Turne you vnto me withall your heart, with fasting, with weeping, & with mourning: Likewise, in the 3. chap. to the Hebrewes: Exhort one another, while it is called to day, lest any of you be hardned; through the deceitfulness of sinne. And in the same chapter: To day if ye will heare his voyce, harden not your hearts as in the prouocation. So that now, euen now, euen now is the time of repentance.

Now while he calleth, now whilest he speaketh, now whilest hee knocketh; let vs now therefore heare, let vs now therefore obey, let vs now therefore redeeme this day, this present Wednesday, which haue fore-flowed so many dayes, which haue so long hardned our hearts, which haue let so many good things runne out and spill bestowes: let vs take vp this day, and make it the day of our Repentance. Although wee could neuer be moued with any Sermon hitherto, yet let vs now be moued once at last. Let vs now say, This shall be my day of repentance, I will deferre it no longer, but now will I turne vnto my God, & forsake all my former wicked waies, and mine owne imaginatons: I will now change the course of my life, and begin

anew againe. I will be acquainted with Gods
 Word, and take counsell there how to doe, how
 to behaue my selfe in euery action, I will not on-
 ly refozme my selfe, but also my whole household,
 wife, chilozen, and seruants accordyng vnto the
 same. Thus, my deare brethren, I beseech you,
 purpose in your hearts without any further de-
 lay: and be not like to Epicures & slack-graces,
 which say: Youth will be youtfull, and youth
 will haue a course, and what shoulde we make
 it so holy when we are young: yush, there needes
 but a sigh an houre before death, let vs be mer-
 ry now, wee shall neuer bee younger, we will
 repent when we are old. As if (poore soules)
 they had Repentance in their sleeues, and at
 their commandement, and that they could re-
 pent when they list. No, no, these fellows shall
 pay for their presumption: For God will giue
 them ouer to hardnesse of heart and impeniten-
 cy, because they tooke so much vpon them, and
 made so long delayes, that in the meane season
 they might enioy the profits and pleasures of
 sinne. Therefore (good brethren) let vs not put
 it off from day to day, but let vs now seeke the
 Lord whilst he may be found, and call vpon
 him whilst he is neere: let vs take time while
 time is, for time and tide tarryeth for no man:
 Let vs know this to be the time of our visitati-
 on. Our Saviour Christ wept ouer Ierusalem,
 because

because they knew not the time of their visitation. Wee repproued the Jewes, because they could discerne the face of the skie, but could not discerne the signes of the times. And surely in the end it will turne to our destruction, if we will not know this to be the day of mercy, the time of grace, wherein God stretcheth forth his hand vnto vs, and wisdom e cryeth out in the streets. Therefore now while we haue the light, let vs walke as children of the light: the night cometh when no man can worke. It shall be too late to call for mercy after this life, when the gates of mercy are shut vp, and repentance will be too late. Oh deare Christians, let vs remember the five foolish virgins, which because they ouer-slowed the time, had Heauen gates barred vp against them. Let vs also remember the fearefull and dolefull example of the rich Glutton, which being in hell torments, yelled and yelped for the least ease and helpe that might be, and could not haue it. An hundred thousand times therefore better it is for vs, to leaue our sinnes now, to mourne for them now, and now to repent, then hereafter (alas) when it shall be too late: better now a great deale to take some paines, to straine our selues to leaue our sinnes, and to make our hearts smart for them, then to bee condemned for ever, and to cry in the bottome of hell: Wee haue wearied our

selues in the way of wickednes and destruction, and we haue gone through dangerous wayes, but we haue not knowne the way of the Lord. What hath pride profited vs? Or what profite hath the pompe of riches brought vs? All these things are passed away like a shadow, and as a Hoste that passed by. We haue set our selues against the children of God, we haue had them in derision, and in a parable of reproach: Wee foles thought their liues madnesse, & their end with dishonor: but lo, they are counted amongst the children of God, & their portion is amongst the Saints: Therefore let vs know the time of our calling, and let vs not be worse then the fowles of the ayre: the Turtle, the Crane, and the Swallow, obserue the time of their coming: the husband-man taketh his time, the Mariner watcheth his tides: Therefore let vs also take the time, and turne to the Lord, whilst it is said to day: Which grace God grant vs. Now let vs returne to the fourth point, concerning the causes which may mooue vs vnto repentance. Herein I haue obserued nine speciall things.

First, the great mercy of God leadeth vs vnto Repentance, as Rom. 9. The bountifullnesse of God leadeth vs vnto repentance, saith the Apostle: God doth continually follow vs with his mercies and benefits, both concerning our soules

of Repentance.

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soules and bodies, we haue no good thing which we haue not receiued at his hands, we hold all that we haue, of him & to him we are beholding for all: great is his mercy towards our bodies, and euery mercy & benefite either towards soule or body calleth vs to repentance: he giueth vs meat, drinke, and cloathing, these call vs to repentance: he keepeth vs at his owne cost and charges here below, this calleth vs to repentance: the Sun, the Moone, and the Stars call vs vnto repentance: the birds of the ayre, the fishes of the sea, and the fruites of the earth cry out vpon vs both loud and shrill, Repent, repent: All creatures moue vs vnto repentance. Our Creation calleth vs, our Redemption cryeth, our Sanctification knocketh, and our Election mooueth vs to repentance: What could God doe more for his Vineyard that hee hath not done? Therefore let vs repent.

Secondly, the iudgements of God moue vs vnto repentance: For all the Thunder-bolts, Plagues, and punishments, which God hath throwne downe vpon obstinate sinners, from the beginning of the world, are so many warning-peeces vnto vs, to awake vs out of the dead sleepe of sin, and to picke vs to repentance. As in I. Cor. 10. When the Apostle had cited diuers great iudgements of God against the old Israelites for diuers sinnes, he concludeth:

Now all these things came vnto them for examples, and were written to admonish vs, vpon whom the ends of the world are come. So that all the iudgements we reade of in the Scriptures, are as so many admonitions, and as it were Cart-ropes to draw vs to Repentance. All the iudgements we reade of, doe see, and heare of euery day, knocke with maine strokes, beate downe-right vpon our consciences to repentance. The ugly monsters, strange births, and fire constellations, vnkowne comets, sodaine deaths, maruellous droughts, vnwonted snowes, horrible inundations, foraine wonders, strange apparitions, threatnings of heauen aboue, with flaming and shooting fire, trembling of the earth vnder our feete, and our houses ouer our heads, as of late dayes: What are all these, but as it were great Cranes with beames and Cable-ropes to draw vs to the Lord by repentance?

Thirdly, the Word of God helpeth vs to repentance: For as God in the old time sent his Prophets both early and late, to call the rebellious Jewes to repentance; so hee sendeth abroad the Preachers and Messengers in these dayes to sound by the Trumpet of his Word, and to ring the sweete Vells of Aaron amongst them, to awake them to repentance: but alas, how lightly are they regarded: Who heareth their
their

of Repentance. 35

their voyce: But surely this is the last remedy that God hath appointed: and if this will not moue vs to repentance, if this will not cure vs, then are we altogether incurable.

Fourthly, the infinite number of sinnes wee haue committed, ought to bee so many spurs in our sides to prick vs to repentance. It is sufficient (saith S. Peter) that we haue spent the time of our life after the lusts of the Gentiles, walking in wantonnesse of lusts, drunkennesse, gluttony, drinkings, and all abominable idolatries. Now therefore it is time to repent. Oh that men would looke backe to themselves, as they were fortye, thirtie, twentie, or ten yeeres agoe! Oh that they would call to minde their open and secret sins, and me thinketh it should make their hearts bleed within their bellies to thinke vpon them: Oh that they would consider how much time they haue mis-spent, and how many good things they haue neglected, and altogether omitted.

Fifthly, the shortnesse of our life calleth earnestly vpon vs to repent. The time of our life is sixtie yeeres and ten, and if they liue to eighty yeeres, yet is their strength but labour and sorrow, and so it is cut off quickly, and we flie away, saith the Prophet Dauid: we haue spent our yeeres as a thought, therefore hee addeth, Teach vs to number our dayes, that wee may apply

apply our hearts to wisdom. Our life, for the shortnesse and inconstancie of it, in the Scriptures, is compared to Grass, to a Vapour, to Smoake, to a weavers Shuttle, which glideth away swiftly. Euen so the dayes of men passe away, no man knoweth how. Man is of a short continuance (saith Iob) and full of trouble. Experience teacheth vs, that to day a man, to morrow none. Hence away we must all, here is no abiding place for vs: how soone we know not. Therefore let vs repent.

Sixtly, the small number of those which shall be saued, ought to thrust vs forward to repentance. Striue to enter in at the narrow gate: for many (I say vnto you) will seeke to enter in, and shall not be able, saith Christ, Luke 13.24. And in another place he saith, The gate is strait, and the way narrow that leadeth vnto life, and few there be that finde it. If men would consider of this, it would make them looke better about them, and try with themselves, whether they be of that small number or no.

Seuenthly, Death threatens vs, which is very terrible to the flesh, and the remembrance of it very bitter to a man that is souled and soked in the pleasure of this World. It flattereth no man, it regardeth no person, it weigheth no friendship, it careth not for rewards, it is very grim, ugly, and cruell, and killeth downe right where

where it hitteth. Therefore let vs repent.

Eightly, the day of iudgement and second appearing of the Son of man. He will come as a theefe in the night, in the which the beauens shall passe away with a noyse, and the Elements shall meke with heat, and the earth with the workes that are therein shall be burnt vp. Seeing therefore that all these things must be dissolued, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conuersation, and godlinesse? saith S. Peter 2.3. The Lord Iesus shall shew himselfe from heauen with his mighty Angles in flaming fire, rendring vengeance vnto them that know not God, and obey not the Gospell of our Lord Iesus Christ, saith the Apostle, 1. Thess. 1. I saw (saith Iohn Reu. 20.) a great white throne, and one that sat on it, from whose face fled away both the earth and the heauen, and their place was no more found. And I saw the dead, both great & small, stand before God, and the bookes were opened, and another booke was opened, which is the Booke of life, and the dead were iudged of those things which were written in the bookes, according to their workes; and the Sea gaue vp her dead which were in her, and death and hell deliuered vp their dead which were in them; and they were iudged euery man according to his workes.

In these places we see both the suddennesse,
the

the fearefollneffe and glozy of Christs comming.

For he shall not come pooze and contemptuously, as in the first visitation, but he shall come very princely, royally, and triumphantly, to the great terror of his enemies, when a consuming fire shall goe before him, and ten thousand thousands of Angels waite vpon him: at what time the Kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chiefe Captaines, and the mightie men, & euery bond-man, and euery free-man shall hide themselves in dens, and among the rockes of mountaines, and say to the rockes and mountaines, Fall on vs, and hide vs from the presence of him that sitteth on the Throne, and from the wrath of the Lambe: for the great day of his wrath is come, and who can stand? Reuel. 6. Therefore let vs repent.

The last thing is Hell torments, then the which nothing is more intollerable. Therefore saith Christ, Matth. 9. If thine hand cause thee to offend, cut it off, it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, then hauing two hands, to goe into hell, into the fire that neuer shall be quenched, where the worme dyeth not, and the fire neuer goeth out. The Scripture speaketh terribly to our senses concerning the estate of the damned persons, calling it hell fire, damnation, the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone for ever. In the thirtieth Chapter of the
Prophecie

Propheſſie of Eſay, it is called Tophet, and is euen prepared of old, it is euen prepared for the King, he hath made it deepe and large, the burning thereof is fire and much wood, the breath of the Lord, like a riuer of brimſtone, doeth kindle it. Theſe ſpeeches are terrible in themſelues, and very marueilouſly amaze vs. But if I had the tongues of an hundred men, nay of an hundred Angels, yet were I not able to utter them, as ſome (one day) ſhall ſeele them, much leſſe were you able to conceiue them. If all the tortures and cruell tormentes that can be deuized by the wit of man, were executed vpon ſome one, yet were it nothing to this. Wee poore wretches thinke there is no paine to a cholicke, or a cruell ague: But if all cholickeſes, agues, and other ſtrange diſeaſes, could poſſibly light vpon one man, it were but a flea-biting to that which is to come. The paine is endleſſe, eaſeleſſe and remedileſſe. The dayes of their heliſh tormentes ſhall neuer wear out, nor their peeres come to an end, the longer they continue, the leſſe hope they haue: and as many peeres be expired as there be men in the world, and ſtarres in the heauens: when as many thouſand peeres are ended, as there be ſtones and ſands by the Sea ſhore, yet ſtill there be tenne hundred thouſand times ſo many more to come. Thoſe that will not now be moued in hearing,
ſhall

shall then be crushed in pieces in feeling. All drunkards, Swearers, Whoremongers, Usurers, Extortioners, Lpars, Pockers, Contemners, Secure persons, Jolly fellowes, Ropstring Ruffians, Lusty-bloods, the braue lads of the World, and all other unbeleeuers shall one day be apprehended, and arraigned before the Barre of Gods Tribunall-seate, where the Maiestie of God shall stand aboue them with a naked Sword of Vengeance, and a Scepter of Justice: the Diuell, that old Sathan, shall stand on the one side to accuse them, and their owne consciences on the other side to condemne them; and the gasping gulfe of hell vnderneath them, ready to swallow them vp for euermore. Then shall the dreadfull sentence of eternall woe and damnation proceed against them, Goe ye cursed into hell fire, &c. There they shall drinke (as a iust recompence of their iniquitie) the bitter cup of Gods eternall wrath and indignation in the kingdome of darkenesse, and in the fearefull presence of Sathan, and all the cursed enemies of Gods grace: where the dolefull Drumme of Gods anger shall euer sound through their eares, where euer shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth: where shall be confusion, woe, and endlesse lamentation: their gripes shall be so great, their groanes so deepe, and their garboiles so intollerable, that they shall

shall grin like a dog in their infernall con-
fusions, and with howling & yelling cry out, *Woe*
and alas that euer I was bozne: *W* that I hao
neuer beene bozne, or that my mother had bozne
me a toad: so, then my condition should haue
beene better then it is: cursed was the time I
was begot in, the houre I was conceived in, and
the day I sucked my mothers paps: cursed I
was alwayes, cursed I am, and cursed I shall
be euermore: *W*o, wo, how great is my toy-
ment: *W*hole heart doth not melt: *W*hole
eares doe not glow: *W*hole hatres do not stand
vpon his head to heare these things: *T*here-
fore (deare brethren) let vs repent. If the mercy
of God cannot allure vs, let his iudgements
scarre vs: If his iudgements cannot scarre vs,
let the *W*ord moue vs: If the *W*ord cannot
moue vs, let our sins amaze vs: If our sins can-
not amaze vs, let the shortnes of our life dampe
vs: If the shortnesse of our life cannot dampe
vs, let the small number of those that shall be
saued afray vs: If that cannot afray vs, let death
terrifie vs: If death cannot terrifie vs, let the
day of iudgement shake vs: If that cannot
shake vs, let hell tormentes shudder vs and rend
vs in peeces. For verily (my brethren) if none
of all these can preuaile, if we will not for all
this repent, but be still obstinate, then we
shall all perish, and bee damned, according

to Christs words. Now let vs proceed to speake of those things which binder from repentance: which indeed, although they be in number infinite, yet at this time I will lay forth seuen speciall lets and hinderances vnto repentance.

The first is vnbeliefe: that is, when men will not beleue such things which are spoken and proued vnto them out of the Word of God: that is it that bowiteth by all good things, and possioneth the very intrayles of a man, and keepe all good graces from vs, as appeareth, Matth. 13. 38. Hee did not many great workes there for their vnbeliefes sake: and in the fourth Chapter to the Hebrewes it is said: Vnto them was the Gospell preached, as also vnto vs: but the word that they heard, profited them not, because it was not mixt with Faith in those that heard it. So that here we may see, although we heare neuer so much, yet if wee bring not Faith with vs, we shall neuer profit vnto repentance: For vnbeliefe taketh by our hearts for Satan, and refuseth all the wholesome doctrine of Saluation, and doth so harden men in the wayes of sinne, that in the end they become past feeling, and cannot be touched one whit, either with the iudgements or mercy of God, but count the one as blasts of winde, and make the other a couert for their filthinesse. You shall note some men, who when they haue heard their

their sinnes straightly ripped by by the Word
of God, and their iust damnation proued by the
same, without speedy and earnest repentance,
will breake out into these words of vnbeliefe :
If this be as he saith, God helpe vs, I hope it
is not so: I trust I shall doe well enough for
all this, as long as I haue a good faith in God,
and doe no body no harme: Shall I leave my
pleasures and my profit for their saying :
What : doe they thinke none shall be saued,
but such as reade the Scriptures, and heare
Sermons: God forbid, but those which doe not
goe to heare Sermons, should be saued as well
as they: why, may not one serue God as well
at home in his house, haunting good Bookes and
good Prayers, as by comming to the Church
to heare Sermons and Seruice: Alas: these
men stand too much in their owne light, and
bewray what folly and ignorance is in them.
For doe they thinke to bee saued by any other
meanes then God hath appointed: or when
God hath auouched any thing in his Word,
will they except against it, and so make God a
liar: when God hath once set downe a thing,
and proued it to their faces, will they yet re-
ply, when God hath told vs, that the preaching
of the Word is the ordinary meanes of our sal-
uation, shall we hope to be saued, though wee
contemne it, and neuer (or very seldome) heare

it? Is not this plaine infidelity and vnbeliefe, that when God saith one thing, wee will say another: when God saith yea, we will say no, I hope not so? Yea surely, that is it that stoppeth the way to Gods graces, and barreth vs out from repentance.

The second let is, the presumption of Gods mercy: for if men be sharply reprov'd for their sin, and exhorted to repentance, by and by they talke couertly, saying; God is mercifull, God is mercifull: as though God were made all of mercy, and that there were no iustice in him at all. And thus the wicked make Gods mercy an occasion to sinne. Which thing the Prophet Nahum in the first of his Prophecy doth sharply reprove: The Lord (saith he) is slow to anger, but hee is great in power, and will not surely cleare the wicked. But because I haue spoken befoze of this presuming & misapplying of Gods mercy, I will here passe it ouer, and willing you to note it as one speciall let vnto Repentance.

The third hinderance is, the example of the multitude: for that doth hearten and embolden men vnto sinne: as when many Birds flicker and flocke together, they fall vpon the baite, without any feare; but one or two alone will be afraid: euen so the examples of many sin-companions doe embolden men to run through
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the snares of Sathan, without any mistrust. Therefore it is said in Exod. 23. Thou shalt not follow a multitude to doe euill. This is the thing which hindereth a great number from God: for they neuer looke vp vnto God, or to his word, but stare vpon the common doings of most men, and examples of the world: thinking if they doe as the most men doe, and as their fore-fathers haue done before them, they are cocke-sure, and on an euen ground. And there-vpon ariseth their diuellish Proverbe: Doe as the most men doe, and the fewest will speake ill of you. But they haue forgotten Saint Pauls Rule, Rom. 12. Fashion not your selues like vnto this World. These fellows that stand vpon multitudes, will reason thus: We see none of the great ones of the world, none of the noble, none of the rich, none of the wise and prudent, receiue this doctrine, but onely a few shake-raggies, and beggarly rascals; and therefore it is a token that it is nothing worth, and that it is doubtfull, and not for vs to meddle withall. Loe what thoughts may creepe into our heads and how slyly Sathan may trumpe in our way and blinde-fold vs, and leade vs away in the darke, by dotting vs with the example of the multitude. Therefore let vs take heed of those pit-falls which Sathan layeth in our way, and not be carried away with those thoughts

and reasons. The wicked beare themselves in hand, that they shall win the game, and that the gale goeth on their side, and there is nothing but crowing long before it be day, and great triumphing among them before any stroke be giuen, and that because we are but a handfull of people, and they a great multitude, and that in a manner the whole world agreeth with them to practise our death. Thus the diuell doth cast a mist before their eyes, and closely leads them away from repentance. Therefore, deare brethren, let vs stand fast in the Word of the Lord, and not be caried away, and bowed quite downe with the raging streame of the multitude, but let vs know it to be one speciall engine of Sathan, wherby he winneth vs from repentance.

The fourth let vnto repentance is long custome of sinne, for that taketh away all sense and feeling of sinne, and maketh it, as it were, another Nature vnto vs, so that we may as well alter nature, as shake it off, when it is once thus soulered vnto vs through long custome. Therefore it is said, Ier. 13. 23. Can the black-Moore change his skinne, or the Leopard his spots? Then may you also doe good that are accustomed to doe euill. There the Prophet affirmeth that it is as hard to cure an old disease, that is bred in the bones, and to remedy a sinne, that hath beene hatched and brought vp with vs, as
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to wash a Blacke Dooze white, or to change the spots of a Leopard, which cannot be without destroying of nature. And surely, try it who will, he shall finde it as hard a matter to leaue an old custome, whether it bee of swearing, of gaming, of lying, of whooring, of euill company, or any other sinne, as to wash an Ethiopian. Therefore it is written, Prou. 27. Though thou shouldest bray a foole in a morter, among Wheate brayed with a Pestell, yet will not his foolishnesse depart from him. So that as long as we are in custome with sinne, the dooze of repentance is barred against vs.

The fift hinderance is, long escaping of punishment, for the wicked thereby are hardened in sinne, and diuened off from repentance: euen as an old cheefe that hath stollen a long time, and escaped both prison and gallowes, is animated moze boldly to proceed in his wickednes, thinking he shall so alwayes escape: So many filthy and loose liuers goe forward in their abomination without repentance, thinking that because God doth not incontinently punish them, and shew some manifold iudgement and signe of his wrath vpon them, therefore they shall be acquitted for altogether. Whereas contrariwise, if God should by and by strike them downe as soone as they had sinned, by thundering vpon one, and lightening vpon another,
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and raining fire and brimstone vpon the third, it would make them afraid. Percupon it is said in 2. Pet. 3. 2. 4. This first vnderstanding, that there shall come in the last daies mockers, which will walke after their lusts, and say: Where is the promise of his comming? For since the Fathers dyed, all things continue alike from the beginning of the Creation. But let these men well know, that when God hath delayed a long time, and prolonged the terme of the wicked, at length he will shew, that although he waited for their repentance, yet he forgot not their misdeedes, but registered them before him, and packed them by vpon a great heape to increase the terror of his wrath.

The first hinderance is, the beholding of other mens ends. For when some men that haue liued a wicked and an vngacious life, and haue beene notorious sinners, euen to the Worldward, so that euery man could point at them: yet if vpon their death-bed they can say a few good words, and cry God mercy, and say their prayers, and forgive all the world, and so dye quietly, it is marvellous to heare how foolish people of the world will exalt them, and iustifie them, saying: He made a very good end, as any man could make, he died as quiet as a Lambe, and set all things in good order before he dyed. Percupon another wicked and monstrous
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barlet is encouraged to sinne. For thinketh he, such a man liueth as loosely as I, or any man else, and yet he made a very good end, and why may not I do so too? But alas, these mens eyes are bleared; for to die quietly is not to die godly: to cry God mercy for fashion, is not to haue God mercifull: to say a few prayers from the teeth outward, is not to dye in the Faith of Christ: for many doe all these, and yet dye miserably.

The last let is, hope of long life: for while men feede and besot themselves in this hope, they are drunken in sinne, and deferre the day of repentance, as the rich man in the 12. of Luk. dreaming of his long life, cast off all thought of God, and the other life, and of Christs coming, and of all good things, and said within himselfe: Soule, thou hast much goods laid vp for many yeeres, liue at ease, cate, drinke, and take thy pastime. Thus the bleare-eyed men of this world, choake vp repentance, and quite smother it, by doting themselves with hope of long life. Therefore, my deare brethren, I beseech you by the mercies of God, in the bowels of Christ Iesus, that none of all these common lets may stay you from speedy and unfained repentance, but that you may ouer-slide them all: Lest haply you being found without repentance, and taken caddy in your sins, should
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all perishe, and be damned, according to their sentence. Wherefore in conclusion, let vs with godly Ezechiah be afraid of Gods threatening, sorrow aforesaid, stand in awe of God, examine our consciences, mourne for our sins, and lament inwardly, that when the wicked, who haue swimmied in pleasure here below, shall enter into their eternall paines, we may then, I say, there haue eternall peace & rest: that when Iesus Christ shall appeare from heauen with all his Angels, we may haue crownes of glory, and raigne with our God and our Saviour his Sonne, and all his Saints and Angels, in the midst of all ioy, in the heauens for euermore. To the which ioy he bring vs all, which hath so dearely bought vs, Iesus Christ the righteous. To whom with the Father, and the holy Ghost, be all Honour, Glory, Praise, Power, and Dominion, now and for euermore, Amen.

FINIS.

